

What We're Looking At

Resumption and Movement in Early Modern English Relative Clauses

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- (1) a. This seemed to be done in distrust of the privy council, as if they might stifle his evidence; **[[which to prevent ____], he put it in safe hands]** [Gilbert Burnet, *History of my own time*, 1683–1713]
- b. Mr Hoby, my Mother, and my selfe, went to visitt some freindes **[[who, ____ beinge not at home], we returned]** [Lady Margaret Hoby, *Diary*, 1599–1601]
- c. receive then this Draught **[with which when thou art refresh'd ____], thou mayst more strongly proceed to other Matters which yet remain]** [Richard Preston (tr.), *Consolation of Philosophy*, 1695]

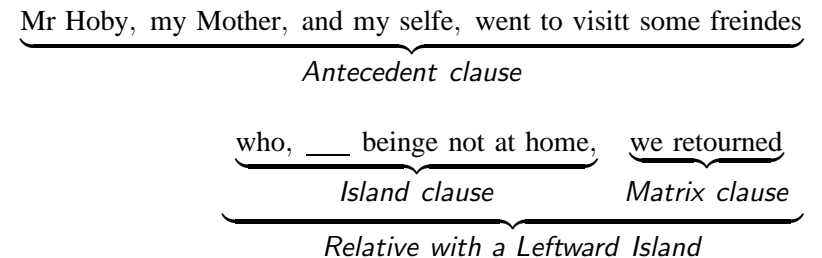
Call them *Relatives with a Leftward Island*, or RLIs.



First Pass Characterisation

- ▶ A relative clause, consisting of:
 - ▶ A relative pronoun, at the left edge of:
 - ▶ A strong island, which contains:
 - ▶ The gap associated with the relative pronoun, to the left of:
 - ▶ The “matrix” clause.

The Building Blocks



How to Interpret an RLI

- ▶ **Nonrestrictive** relatives (*continuative*, in Jespersen's sense);
 - ▶ Used to **advance the narrative** w.r.t. the antecedent clause;
 - ▶ Pronoun is interpreted like a **definite, anaphoric pronoun**, but fronted;
 - ▶ ... to prevent *this*, he put it in safe hands
 - ▶ The island is sometimes **semantically dependent on the following matrix**, never on the antecedent.
- (2) ye abstaine from meates offered to idoles, and from blood, & from things strangled, and from fornication: [[from which **if** ye keepe your selues ___], yee shall doe well].
[New Testament, Authorized Version, 1611]



Basic Facts I

- ▶ Noted by Jespersen and Visser, and briefly in *Cambridge History*. Also studied by Rissanen (1984); van der Wurff (1988), and Kytö & Rissanen (1993). Initially brought to my attention by Jack Hoeksema.
- ▶ Examples to be discussed here come from Penn Parsed Corpora - 404 tokens, 1 per c.4,500 words.
- ▶ Almost unattested (3 examples) before the 16th century.
- ▶ Robustly attested as soon as they came into existence.



Basic Facts II

- ▶ Many long texts contain no examples, which may suggest not acquired by everyone.
- ▶ Concentrated in philosophical or religious works, sometimes claimed (e.g. by van der Wurff) to be a borrowing from Latin (Moessner 1992; Rissanen 1999: borrowing from French), but found in texts from all registers to some extent
- ▶ Died out gradually, mainly over the 19th century (last example in Visser is from 1883), after a heyday in the 16th and 17th centuries.



Basic Facts III

- ▶ Not unique to EModE: similar examples exist in at least Latin (Madvig 1870), Medieval Italian (Bianchi 1999), Early Modern Dutch (Ackema & Neeleman 2007), Bavarian German (Felix 1985), and Hindi (Rajesh Bhatt, p.c.).
- (3) das ist der Wein [[den wenn ich ___ trink], krieg ich
this is the wine which if I drink get I
Kopfweh].
headache
“This is the wine which I get a headache if I drink.”
- ▶ This example is **restrictive**, though (also found in Latin and Hindi) — not clear if exactly the same construction.



The Plan

1. Get a synchronic analysis in place (most of the talk).
2. Turn to some considerations in the diachronic development (more speculative).

Things We Don't Find

- (4)
- a. ✓A married Gentleman coming through Canterbury, his Horse threw him, **[[which a young Gentlewoman seeing ___], fell a laughing]** [Anonymous, *Penny Merriments*, 1685–7]
 - b. **No rightward islands**
*... [which a young Gentlewoman fell a laughing [seeing ___]]
 - c. **No unbounded dependencies**
*... [which I think [that [a young Gentlewoman seeing ___], fell a laughing]]

Conclusion: the relative pronoun remains within the island (*contra* Felix, Van der Wurff).



Further Properties I

- ▶ We never see any obvious gap where the island could have moved from → it's base-generated at the left.
- (5) *John, [[who [___ and Bill]] we saw ___ last night]
- ▶ Relevant examples are overwhelmingly in appositive relatives (401/404 examples).
- (6)
- a. *I wonder [[which married Gentleman a young Gentlewoman seeing ___] fell a laughing].
 - b. *The thing [that a young Gentlewoman seeing ___] fell a laughing] was actually heartbreaking.



Further Properties II

- ▶ The relatives are always sentence final.
 - ▶ Punctuation is unreliable, but these relatives have a tendency to be separated from what goes before by heavy punctuation (5x more likely than other relatives).
- (7) they went about to slay him. **Which** when the brethren knewe ___, they brought him downe to Cesarea, and sent him forth to Tarsus.



Consequences

- ▶ We saw that the island is base-generated as a left-adjunct to the matrix, and that the A'-chain is entirely within that adjunct.
 - ▶ Left-adjoined constituents are leftward islands, so we instantly capture those properties.
 - ▶ Also explains sentence-final position: the island is syntactically dependent only on following material. The RLI is *syntactically* independent of the antecedent clause — the only link is *semantic*.
- ▶ This predicts that every island in an RLI should be found in non-RLIs as a left-adjunct.



Left-Adjunction in RLIs and Non-RLIs I

Finite adverbial clauses:

- (8) a. **RLI:** but not so easie work found Ethelfrid against another part of Britans that stood in arms, [[whom **though** at last he overthrew ____], **yet** with slaughter nigh as great to his own souldiers]. [John Milton, *The history of Britain, that part especially now call'd England*, 1670]
- b. **Non-RLI:** And [[**though** the upper part of Weredale be not very fertile of corne]; **yet** ys there very fine gresse in the dale self wher the ryver passith]. [John Leland, *Itinerary*, 1535–43]



Left-Adjunction in RLIs and Non-RLIs II

Comparative correlatives (rare):

- (9) a. **RLI:** For to try Doctrines is to enquire into the grounds and reasons of them; [[which **the better** any man understands ____], **the more firmly** he will be established in the Truth]. [John Tillotson, Sermon, 1679]
- b. **Non-RLI:** [[**The sooner** a child is put to School], **the better** it is] [Charles Hoole, *A New Discovery of the Old Art of Teaching Schoole*, 1660]



Left-Adjunction in RLIs and Non-RLIs III

Leftward purpose clauses:

- (10) a. **RLI:** if it [your butter] be ouer cold it will not come at all . . . , [[which faults **to** helpe ____] if you churine your butter in the heate of Sommer it shall not be amisse, if . . .] [Gervase Markham, *Countray Contentments*, 1615]
- b. **Non-RLI:** [[**To** make children to take a delight in spelling], let them spell many syllables together, which differ but only in one letter, as hand, band, land, sand, &c.] [John Brinsley, *Ludus Literarius or The Grammar Schoole*, 1627]



Present participial absolutes:

- (11) a. **RLI:** wee espied three saile being small boats, sleightly wrought together, called Paugaias which we made after and tooke, [[which **they on shore espying** ___], they sent out an Aduisor] [Robert Coverte, *A Trve and Almost Incredible Report of an Englishman*, 1612]
- b. **Non-RLI:** three or four Male-Carps will follow a Female; and . . . then [[**she putting on a seeming coyne**], they force her through weeds and flags] [Izaak Walton, *The Compleat Angler*, 1676]



Past participial absolutes:

- (12) a. **RLI:** having opened the Letter, he gave it to me to read for him, [[**which** ___ **ended**], he said he would answer it] [John Drummond, 1st Earl Melfort, Letter to King James the Second from Rome, 1690]
- b. **Non-RLI:** [[**she gone**], comes my wife and to walk in the garden] [Samuel Pepys, Diary, 1667]



Semantics of the Relative Pronoun I

- ▶ There is no syntactic relationship between the relative pronoun and its antecedent.
 - ▶ They also needn't be string-adjacent (though they usually are) — as with EModE appositives in general:
- (13) a. They went ouer [y^e water]_i to the church of the sayde Seyntis, [whiche_i is an arme of the see] [Anonymous chaplain, Journal, 1506]
- b. Do [a longe rowe of seruauntes goyng in order waytyng vpon the]_i, make the happye and good? [[whyche_i yf they be euyll manerd], then be they a perilous charge to they house, and a veheme~t greuous burden to the, beyng their mayster]. [George Colville (tr.), *Consolation of Philosophy*, 1556]



Semantics of the Relative Pronoun II

- ▶ This explains why RLI are nonrestrictive: any standard story about the semantics of restrictive relatives is based on a syntactic relation holding between relative clause and some projection of the antecedent (to permit, e.g., predicate modification).
- ▶ But the pronoun in an RLI needs an overt, accessible, antecedent (*that*/**which was interesting*).
- ▶ The interpretation of the pronoun is definite → the relative pronoun is an E-type pronoun.
- ▶ See also Sells (1986); Demirdache (1991) on PDE nonrestrictive relative pronouns.



Synchrony: Summary

- ▶ An RLI is based around an independently occurring **base-generated left-adjunction** configuration.
- ▶ The pronoun is fronted **within the left-adjoined clause**.
- ▶ There is **no syntactic relation** between the RLI and its antecedent, and **no string-adjacency** requirement.
- ▶ The relative pronoun is an **E-type pronoun**.
- ▶ So the island in an RLI is **syntactically** dependent on the **following clause**, while the relative pronoun is **semantically** dependent on **preceding material**.



Resumptive RLIs

A related construction appeared in 14th-15th century English. It differed in that there was a resumptive pronoun, not a gap, at the foot of the chain.

- (14)
- I beseche þe, chef soueraygne Lord, graunte me þi signet, [[where-of when þat she haþ knalage þer-of], þat she may applie hur will to þi godly purpose]. [Sermon, CMROYAL, c.1425]
 - For schrewes . . . doon ofte time thinges [[the whiche thingis, whan thei han doon **hem**], they demen that tho thinges ne scholden nat han ben doon]. [Geoffrey Chaucer, *Boethius*, c.1380]

Attested in *wh*-relatives (22 hits), but not really in *that*-relatives (2 hits). Note resumption of complements.



MidE Resumption I

Resumption was also found for relativisation from less accessible positions (i.e. non-complements)

- (15) Schal we thanne approchen us to hem [that I have schewed [that **thei** ben lyke to beestes]]? [Geoffrey Chaucer, *Boethius*, c.1380]

Attested in *that*-relatives (10 hits) and *wh*-relatives (15 hits)



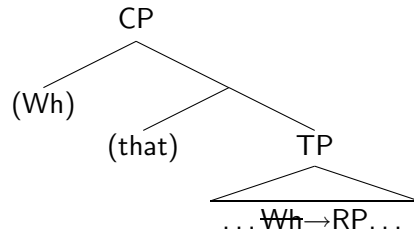
MidE Resumption II

- ▶ So resumption in *wh*- and *that*-relatives was largely parallel.
- ▶ But in one construction (resumptive RLIs), it is restricted to *wh*-relatives.
- ▶ And resumption in resumptive RLIs is not limited to less accessible positions (though too few cases of resumption of complements for certainty).



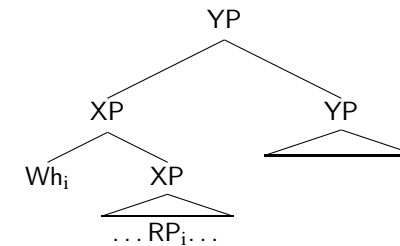
Two Types of Resumption I

- ▶ One type of resumption is much like PDE *intrusive pronouns*: movement leaves a pronoun behind when a gap would violate a locality principle (here, the ECP, although this glosses over some problems).
- ▶ Can apply to *wh*-, *that*- or *wh that*-relatives.



Two Types of Resumption II

- ▶ The other type involves base-generation of the relative pronoun in an adjoined position and binding of a resumptive pronoun.
- ▶ Note the ECP is irrelevant here, so RPs can be found in complement position.



Two Types of Resumption III

Special properties of the second structure:

- ▶ **Restricted to *wh*-relatives**, as *that* is a head and so can't undergo phrasal adjunction.
- ▶ *Wh*-phrase **needn't strictly c-command** resumptive pronoun (r.p. can be in the matrix).

- (16) a. þat ordre þat was founded at Sempyngham be þe solitudine of Seynt Gilbert, [[[of which Seynt]_i, be-cause I mad a special tretis on-to þe maystir of þat ordre], þerfor in þis place I touch no mor of him_i]. [John Capgrave, *Capgrave's Sermon*, c.1452]
- b. [[[Every boy]_i's mother] loves him_i].



Two Types of Resumption IV

Absence of *wh that* in resumptive RLIs is a height effect.

- ▶ The left-adjoined clause adjoins above matrix C^0 .
- (17) a. To use Force against her Majesty in her own Realm, must needs be done with intent to depose her, which Force she must needs resist; [[which if she be not able to do ___], **then followeth** her Death and Destruction]. [Trial of Thomas Howard, Earl of Surrey, 4th Duke of Norfolk, 1571]
- b. [[where-of when þat she haþ knalage þer-of], **þat** she may applie hur will to þi godly purpose]. [Sermon, CMROYAL, c.1425]



Two Types of Resumption V

- ▶ *When, if, etc.* are above $C^0 \rightarrow \checkmark wh P that, *wh that$

(18) [[**the whiche manere whan that** men looken it in thilke pure clenness of the devyne intelligence], it is ycleped purveaunce]; but [[whanne thilke manere is referred by men to thinges that it moeveth and disponyth], than of olde men it was clepyd destyne]. [[**The whiche thinges yif that** any wyght loketh wel in his thought the strengthe of that oon and of that oothir], he schal lyghtly mowen seen that thise two thinges ben dyvers]. [Geoffrey Chaucer, *Boethius*, c.1380]



Changes in EModE

- ▶ To get from the 15th to the 16th century, all you need to do is replace the overt resumptive pronoun with a null one.
- ▶ One other construction where null resumptive pronouns yield a plausible analysis: [P *wh*]. . . [P \emptyset] relative clauses.
- ▶ Once again, there are **violations of strict c-command**, but within the limits allowed by variable binding.

(19) a. and grashoppes come and breses, [[of which_i] no noubre was [of ____i]] [*The Earliest Complete English Prose Psalter*, c.1350]
b. I danced [with [every syntactician]_i] on his_i birthday.



[P *wh*]. . . [P \emptyset]

- ▶ 133 tokens of this construction in the corpora.
- ▶ 11 from 1150–1400, 30 from 1400–1450, and frequent from then until end of corpora.
- ▶ Although other analyses are feasible (copying and partial deletion), it is striking that we find relative chains in *all and only the configurations in which variable binding is possible* (a proper superset of the configurations in which movement is possible).



The Decline of Doubly Filled COMPs I

- ▶ MidE freely allowed doubly filled COMPs, particularly in the 14th and early 15th century (Keyser 1975).

(20) to þe be þankyngge of al oure herte; to me, synful wrecche, noþyng bote confusioun of my face, [**which** þat ___ haue idoo wyckenesses, and so manye goodnesses haue receyued]. [Aelred of Rievaulx, *De Institutione Inclusarum*, c.1400]

- ▶ Died out in the 16th century, but died out first in headed relatives.
- ▶ Last regular user was William Gregory (24.11 per 100k words), died 1467.
- ▶ First regular user of RLI was Robert Fabyan, born c.1450.



The Decline of Doubly Filled COMPs II

- ▶ Doubly filled COMPs are relevant because, on the above analysis, they must be generated by movement (although that movement could leave an intrusive pronoun instead of a gap).
- ▶ Most regular relatives could in principle be generated by movement or by adjunction and binding.
- ▶ The decline of doubly filled COMPs represents a dwindling of the positive evidence for relativisation by movement.
- ▶ Could we even suggest that the advent of nonresumptive RLLs reflects a grammar in which **all** relatives are generated by base-generation and binding of a possibly null pronoun?



Conclusions

- ▶ MidE had two headed relative constructions with resumptive pronouns:
 1. Intrusive pronouns left by movement from less accessible positions for ECP-related reasons
 2. Base generated relative pronouns binding pronouns within a left-adjunction structure (resumptive RLLs)
- ▶ In EModE, null resumption emerged (→ true RLLs).
- ▶ True RLLs emerged just as doubly filled COMPs disappeared from headed relatives, and shortly after [P *wh*]... [P \emptyset] constructions became robustly attested.
- ▶ These changes jointly give greater evidence for relativisation by binding, and less for relativisation for movement, which may reflect a more widespread change in the grammars of at least some speakers w.r.t. relativisation.



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